



חרותנו

Ḥerûtênu, Our LIBERATION

Issue Two, February /March 2006

Shalom ḥaverîm,

I thank all those who have signed on in support of *Our Liberation* as our second issue comes out. *Toda Rabba!* If you enjoy what you read, and are positively effected, share our work with others. If you aren't, share it anyway. We suggest you send it to a clergyman. He'll love finding out that there are modern Ebionites dedicated to exposing the error of Christianity and inspiring Christians to enter into Covenant and embrace of the God of Israel! We offer the same message as Yeshua bar-Yosef: Believe in God alone; Return to God's Covenant and Commandments!

Some of the countries where people regularly read our Ebionite lists and publications (often risking attack from Christians and non-Christians) now include the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, Spanish speaking nations everywhere, Israel, Romania, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Nepal, and others. *Our Liberation* is something for all of you. May the God of Israel bless you.

יְהוָה-

"How happy is he that has the God of Jacob as his help, whose hope, is on YHWH his God—Who made the heavens and the earth, The sea and all that is therein, Who keeps faithfulness forever; Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the famishing; YHWH, Who liberates captives; YHWH, who opens the eyes of the blind; YHWH, Who raises the prostrate, YHWH, Who loves the righteous; YHWH, Who preserves converts; the fatherless and widows, He relieves—but, the way of the lawless, He overturns. YHWH, reigns forever, thy God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Praise ye Yah! " (Tehillim 146:5-10)



The Ebionite Manifesto

The Ebionite Community is the living continuation of the Jewish religious movement of Jesus. Christianity is the religion of Paul and others, and not part of the biblical faith and revelation of the God of Israel nor is it of Jesus.

We declare the man Paul of Tarsus, the false teacher against the mark of Covenant and God's Torah, to be outside of the Way taught by Yeshua, the anointed, son of Miryam and Yosef.

Let his name, Paul, be accursed as he called God's Torah a curse. Let the afflictions he incited the gentiles to heap upon God's name and upon His People strike such great shame upon the gentiles that decent people among them will seek God in repentance from the man of Tarsus' Great Sin. Let the frontlets of their eyes and arm be bound with God's Torah and resist the mark of lawlessness.

We call upon the gentiles to repent, to abandon paganism and the perverse testament, and enter into true covenant through Torah, circumcision, and immersion in order to submit and prepare for the Reign of God as brothers exhibiting good works.

Your teachers, popes, ministers, priests, and leaders lead you to the outer darkness. They lie to you, rob you, abuse you, and use you to do likewise to others as they consume the whole world. They are idolaters who feed at Mammon's breast and have built the empire of Edom for two thousand years.

We expose your "apostle" as false; your "testament" as false; your society as false; your church, its rulers, your governments as false. Our allegiance and hope is to the God of Israel alone.

Yahwism, the faith of the Written Torah given by the One God, is a revolutionary system of life with justice that can supercede all other systems of government and ideologies. The Evyonim are Yahwists above all else. It allows for One Ruler, the God of Israel alone, with none beside Him. God is not man, and no man is divine. No man can make you right with God except yourself, and only you can atone for your sins through repentance and reparation to Him and your fellow man. You will never find God, Yahweh King of the Universe, world within worlds, worlds without end, in a church or shrine, kneeling before statues, sticks, stones, or men. Tear down your church and masjid. Take the wood and stones and build houses for the poor; take the sticks for firewood; sell the treasure and idols to buy food and heal the sick; bring all men in love to bend the knee to the God of Israel. **Yahweh Alone.**

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Calendar

February /March 2006

Readings for Shabbat, February and March 2006

Week	Parasha	Haftara	Tehillim*
Jan. 29-Feb. 4	Bo': Exo. 10.1-13.16	Jeremiah 46.13-28	46-48
Feb. 5 -11	Beshalah: Exo. 13.17-17.16	Judges 4.4-5.31 (S'fardi ritual: Judges 5.1-31)	49-51
Feb. 12-18	Yitro: Exo. 18.1-20.23	Isaiah 6.1-7.6, 9.5-6 (S'fardi ritual: 6.1-13)	52-54
Feb. 19-25	Mishpatim: Exo. 21.1-24.18	Jeremiah 34.8-22, 33.25-26	55-57
Feb. 26-Mar. 4	Terumah: Exo. 25.1-27.19	I Kings 5.26-6.13	58-60
Mar. 5-11	Tetzaveh: Exo. 27.20-30.10	Ezekiel 43.10-27	61-63
Mar. 12-18	Kiy Tissa: Exo. 30.11-34.35	I Kings 18.1-39 (S'fardi ritual: I Kings 18.20-39)	64-66
Mar. 19-25	Wayyakhel: Exo. 35.1-38.20	I Kings 7.40-50 (S'fardi ritual: I Kings 7.13-26)	67-69
	Pekude: Exo. 38.21-40.38	I Kings 7.51-8.21 (S'fardi: substitute I Kings 7.40-50)	70-72

Expected New Moon (Rosh Hodesh) Days

From Jerusalem

Wednesday evening, March 1, 2006

Thursday evening, March 30, 2006?

Special Days

Tu B'shvat Monday, February 13, 2006



TESTAMENT

My Journey to the God of Israel

Binah's Story

I was raised in a Baptist home to some degree. My parents would take my sister and I to an Independent Baptist church and drop us off for Sunday school once a week and come back for us later. Occasionally we'd attend a more charismatic type of church on Sunday evenings as a family with my Aunt but for the most part my parents didn't attend church. When we were younger they'd have us say our bed time prayers and make sure we did our Sunday school lessons. We never did any Bible studies as a family though. I would, however, occasionally see my mother reading her Bible. When my sister and I were teens my mother would drop us off for Sunday school then meet us to attend church services and of course we celebrated all of the traditional Christian holidays. We'd have grace for a holiday dinner but not on a daily basis. At 17 I decided to become a follower of Jesus by "asking him into my heart" as I had been taught throughout my short life.

Most Christians talk of a "personal experience". I definitely had one but not the same as the average Christian because mine has led me on a very different journey. I had a deep conviction on living my life to honor God. I studied the Christian Bible daily. At the age of 27, I joined the Seventh Day Adventist faith because I knew the Bible said the Sabbath is the 7th day of the week and changed my eating practices to only eat clean meat as prescribed in the Torah.

At 35 I began studying with various Messianic groups. My family shed the Christian holidays and embraced the Biblical holy days. I began learning some basic Hebrew and joined an Israeli folk dance group. Although none of the analogies of the trinity ever made sense to me, it was something that I was taught. However, at this point it was becoming more and more apparent to me that it was totally fabricated. Jesus was not God but I still believed he was the messiah. When I discussed some passages in the Bible with my husband he kind of chuckled and said "are you just now figuring that out?". Things began changing with friends. People we knew that lived as we did and that didn't view Jesus as God were starting to convert to Judaism. With the traditional ideas of salvation that were taught throughout my life I was scared for them. My husband assured me that they still believed in God so they were going to be fine. Yet neither of us were ready for that move just yet. Then our other friends started making demands on us that we believe Jesus is God or they wouldn't worship, study, or fellowship with us any longer. My mother and sister became so angry when I'd try to talk about these things with them that I decided it best not to discuss it with them any longer. ... At this point I had found the Ebionite Jewish movement on the internet. Reading the articles and discussion forum really helped me to formulate my thoughts on who Jesus/Yahshua really was. ...A week from tomorrow I will finally complete my conversion to Judaism.

From the book *Jesus without Idolatry*, by Shemayah Phillips

Circumcision: God's Requirement

Circumcision

Circumcision was given as a mark of covenant with Yahweh and is absolutely required in signification and obedience to that covenant relationship with God. We make no arguments to the mystical or hygienic rationale for circumcision—it is commanded and thus required. The lack of circumcision indicates a degree of deliberate estrangement from God. As a child of Avraham, the friend of God, the obedient child submits to identifying mark of a child. The blood of circumcision is the only blood of the covenant with God.

No special personnel were present for Avraham's covenant act. *B'rit Milah* (circumcision) was performed often by a family member and perhaps administered by a patriarch of the family group. No ritual or liturgy is given in scripture. But purpose is clear that circumcision was given as a religious rite.

10 This, is my covenant which ye shall keep, betwixt me and you, and thy seed after thee,—To circumcise to you every male: 11 So shall ye be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin,—So shall it become a sign of a covenant, betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised to you every male to your generations,—he that is born of the house, and he that is bought with silver of any son of a stranger, who is, not of thy seed, 13 He must surely be circumcised, born of thy house or bought with thy silver,—So shall my covenant be in your flesh for an age-abiding covenant. 14 But, as for the uncircumcised male who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin,—that person shall be cut off from among his people,—my covenant, hath he made void.

—Gn 17; cf., Lv 12.3

What does this mean for 'Evyonim? Circumcision may be administered by anyone, including a physician, as long as religious purpose is clear. No outward rite is required but rite is welcomed and should include the above passage. In regard to *piquah nefesh*, concern for life, as the overriding purpose of infant circumcision on the eighth day, it is reasonable to accept a circumcision before the eighth day as it has been after the eighth day through history. The eighth day is most likely empirical, as it may have to do with coagulant agents in the blood to aid healing in the infant. This does not mean that the command to circumcise on the eighth day is to be brushed over. But because Avraham and others of his company were not eight-day-old infants, and the event was similar to a conversion, an infant or convert of varying age enter Yahwistic covenant as converts would.

Circumcision and Proselytes

In the same spirit of life, some *gerim* (*ger nilwim*, *ger toshavim*) who attach themselves to the 'Evyonim may be advanced in years, and others threatened by poor physical condition or illness. In such a case due to age or condition for which *b'rit milah* may be life endangering, such males can be respected as avid supporters of 'Evyonut and "resident-aliens" in the Yahwistic Faith. Technically, they cannot be considered Jews. Though they remain uncircumcised, they are expected to insure that any males within their influence are circumcised and not choose to be estranged from God.

In the Ebionite synagogues there is partition between men, women, and gentiles. The forward area is divided equally between males and females, while the back area or portico is assigned to non-Yahwists and the uncircumcised. That area is also divided into a male and female area.

Yahhanan claims that Yahweh could raise up sons to Avraham from stones. This is a word play if the original language of this gospel was not Greek, as indicated in the note above. To be a son of Avraham is to be obedient to God. A person cannot be obedient to God (or accounted as justified) without obeying His commandments. At the same time, Yahhanan expressed a belief that anyone can be a son of Avraham, through his or her obedience.

Reading the gospel account one might think that there is an issue over accepting gentiles as "sons" as opposed to "homeborn" Jews. It presupposes a difference in gentiles based on birth. This is an artificial argument injected by the anti-semitic Christian Church, and some later Jews, making the matter of serving God an ethnic issue in which God will choose either Jews or gentiles. The argument is created by gentiles who feel slighted by God and Israel who maintain a covenant that requires a different way of life than that of gentiles and the gentile cultural heritage. The gentile who will take God's Torah as his own standard of conduct and undergo conversion is no longer a gentile.

"You shall love the convert (*ger*)"

—Deuteronomy 10:19

"You must understand the feelings of the convert (*ger*)."

—Exodus 23:9

"Dearer to God than all of the Israelites who stood at Mount Sinai is the convert. Had the Israelites not witnessed the lightning, thunder, and quaking mountain, and had they not heard the sounds of the shofar, they would not have accepted the Torah. But the convert, who did not see or hear any of these things, surrendered to God and accepted the yoke of heaven. Can anyone be dearer to God than such a person?"

—Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha 6:32

"Beloved are proselytes by God, for the Bible everywhere uses the same epithet of them as of Israel"

—Talmud, Gerim 4:3

"When a proselyte comes to be converted, one receives him with an open hand so as to bring him under the wings of the Divine Presence."

—Leviticus Rabbah 2:9)

The idea of a "Jewish race" is that Jews can come only from Jews and limits our numbers. It has been helpful to the Church as a device in limiting and depleting the number of Jews working in tandem with the Church's prohibitions against Jews proselytizing Christians. Beginning with Christian laws against proselytizing gentiles (began by the Emperor Theodosius II, c. 438 CE), the long program of Jew hatred was nurtured and raised by the Christian Church till it reached maturity in Adolf Hitler's Germany and its murder of millions of God's People. It continues today in the racist minds of "shit house preachers" who disseminate the belief that if your parents are not Jews you must settle for Christianity as the default. "Sorry, the fellers' down at church have decided you can't be a Jew."

Christianity is not a default choice, even if Judaism is not available. According to its own "fruits" and our personal experiences Christianity is one of the most hate filled religions ever devised, and it is not an option one should even consider. We cannot understand how a decent human being could know the history of Christianity's crimes against mankind and remain a Christian.

What is Yahwism?

Yahwism is the religion that worships Yahweh, the one God, without duality, trinity, or plurality of persons. Avraham was not of the tribe of Judah—considering he was the ancestor of Judah—and ancestor of all of Judah's brothers. Today there are people who like to invent a distinction between the Jews and the other tribes, and also Avraham. So did the gentile followers of Paul, in order to find a level of righteousness among gentiles aside from the righteousness Jews enjoy by covenant with God. One

argument used now is what might be called the British Israel doctrine which says that the "lost" tribes of Israel who had been deported and resettled in exile by the Assyrians eventually migrated across Europe, merging with Celts, Germans, and others. It provides the idea that particularly Anglo-Saxons have dominated the world as part of God's "plan." Many proponents of this idea are anti-Jewish, and it seems to parallel Paul of Tarsus' idea that there exists a "new Israel" that replaces the "old" with a "European Israel" that replaces or improves upon the Jews. To no surprise, we find yet another racist belief championed by Christians (regardless of its historical validity).

Regardless of family descent, Yahwism is a belief system that Avraham *opted into* via his obedience to Yahweh. In acknowledgement of this voluntary arrangement, due to Avraham's trust in this God, a covenant ritual was initiated, and was to be repeated by those who would likewise obey. The same God who made covenant with these 300 or so men made the proposition of obeying His commands to the tribes and others assembled at Sinay. Judah was just one of the tribal groups there that day, yet, by the time of Yeshua, Judah was the only sizeable tribal group left and they continue as "Jews" to this day. Jews are Yahwistic, the other tribes were Yahwistic (until they became syncretistic, exiled, and dispersed into religious obscurity), and Avraham was Yahwistic—in other words, they held a Yahwistic *religion*, and coincidentally they later came to occupy a land that they believed God promised to them through religious revelation.

Avraham, and his seed were of common Mesopotamian stock, the result of thousands of years of ethnic intercourse and intermarriage. His lineage also included idolators in the same way most converts to Yahwism today include similar people in their lineage. Although particular families adopted this religion first, other associated families, tribes, and peoples merged into this Yahwistic social group. With its Torah, Yahwism is a socio-religious system. There is scholarly support that ancient Israel (the ancient Yahwists) did include people who escaped Egyptian domination but also were joined by people of the region (including Midianites, Canaanites, and others who occupied the highlands) and staged a social revolution, just as the Bible describes a revolutionary social system in the Torah, and reveals a diverse alliance of people in covenant with one God.

As the Bible says, Avraham was a "wandering Aramean" (a "Westerner," in Akkadian *Amurru*; Deu 26.5), and Hebrews, perhaps descended from a biblical Ever, may also be identified by some with the *`apiru* / *hapiru* / *habiru*, who occupied a place socially independent of established civilizations of the Fertile Crescent. They were known by Mesopotamians and Egyptians, and were present in Canaan (*Kinahhu* "Purple land"), often as troublemakers to established rule, challenging the established order and threatening territories (Moran: 1987). Etymologically, *`apiru* (Akkadian, "free agent, freebooter"?) may have no direct relationship with *‘ibrî* (Hebrew, "one crossing over"). Canaan was a land of many diverse peoples and the term *Canaanite* does not identify a certain "race" of people, any more than *American* does (or should). The *hapiru* were a social, not racial designation, for these people living on the fringe and outside political control of the Egyptians, the Mesopotamian powers, and city-states of Canaan. Besides presenting various theories of Israelite emergence, Dever also cites a letter of the 14th century BCE from the Canaanite city-state of Shechem reporting that the king's son had *gone over* to the *`Apiru* (Dever: 2003, p. 73ff.). The Hebrews, whether properly *`Apiru*, or not, certainly were outside the control of the city-states also and perhaps little distinction existed in the eyes of their overlords. Most theories about Israel include the idea that the people Israel originated from people indigenous to the region, or that they joined groups of semites from and in conflict with Egypt (Dever: 2003, ch. 4, 8). This could mean that the Hebrews were a people socially identified who had a longer history than the *Hebrews* of the Bible, and before a socio-religious revolution of Yahwism.

In sum, for the Ebionites today Yahwism is not a question of "racial" origins but rather socio-religious revolution. Yahwism is a religiously expressed social contract.

As God made this contract with individuals collectively, not with priests or kings but common men (with a history of non-allegiance to political powers), the individual is directly responsible for covenant adherence—that is allegiance to Yahweh.

Israel had kings, but also a strong anti-monarchial heritage (1Sa 8) which sets an ideal king as obligated to covenant, and covenant justice (that includes equality and accountability). This is why David is considered an ideal king and prototype of the Messiah. He is fully human, with human moral struggle and sin, but also with humility, suffering, accountability, and repentance. The messiah kings of Israel, including David, and the Messiah King of the utopian vision are not important in themselves, but only in that they champion Yahwism.

In the Yahwistic utopia the social situation is not hierarchical but every man will know Torah and have no need of governance because that Torah is written on their inward parts—it is internalized and there is no longer a need of coercion to live and accept justice. The fact that we today have human governments and need coercion (and greed, favoritism, intrigue, and lies) to rule over us shows that the utopian Messianic Age, or better, the Reign of Heaven and its Messiah has not come. The endless quest to promote a particular Messiah—the quest for yet another personality to worship—proves that people neither understand the Reign, nor are they ready for it. People who impose the idea that Yeshua is the Messiah on so many do not understand his teaching to do it, and are satisfied instead with idolatry, crying, "Lord, lord!" One man cannot bring the Reign of God, but he can inspire all men to accept God's Reign. They must "stand at the foot of the mountain" and accept the covenant as Israel did at Sinai.

Gentile to Christian Jew Hate

So there is no issue concerning a person's origin in Yahwism. Although Yahwism did have a territorial and cultural aspect, there have always been converts to Yahwism, beginning with Avraham's "company" to the mixed multitude at Sinay, to the days of Yahḥanan and since. The Church's agenda to attack Judaism is well known (Nicholls: 1995), and it was quite a battle for Church rulers to stamp out synagogue attendance and practices by Christians (Feldman: 1993, 397-411). The ancient anti-semitic feelings are no secret, and the gentile Church inherited them. The hate of Jews is simply the hate of Yahwistic people (who reject gentile control and culture), and incidently they hate the Yahwistic God. Since descendants of the tribe of Judah became the predominant surviving subgroup of ancient Yahwists, that hate shifted to them as a people.

Here is a list of common accusations against Jews by the Romans and Greeks:

- Jews were considered to be impious because they rejected the religious practices of the people where they were living, and refused to acknowledge their god (or gods) and cultural activities Jews associated with paganism. (On the other hand, some gentiles were attracted to Judaism because of this.)
- Jews kept "odd" customs, including purity codes, which excluded meat such as swine, and others eaten by gentiles.
- Jews were lazy because they refused to work on a particular day (like the Sabbath and other holy days not recognized by gentiles).
- Jews were hostile to the laws of the gentile population because they remained loyal to the Yahwistic commandments (the so-called, "Law of Moses"). When given pardon from laws contrary to their religion by authorities, they were seen as being "above the law" and receiving favoritism.
- Jews practiced "mutilation" (circumcision), which Romans and Greeks (and others) condemned in the strongest terms, and often tried to stop the practice of circumcision.

There are other common slanders found in ancient times, such as the story that the Israelites were ejected from Egypt because they were lepers, which might explain an odd fascination with the healing of lepers in the gospels (Mt 8.2; 26.6). But here we have the same complaints that Jews still receive from Christians. It is our own Jewish "anti-social" ways at fault, it seems to them.

For the Jews have long been in revolt ... against humanity; and a race that has made its own a life apart and irreconcilable, that cannot share with the rest of mankind in the pleasures of the table nor join in their libations or prayers or sacrifices, are separated from ourselves by a greater gulf than divides us from Susa or Bactra or the more distant Indies.

—Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.33

Apollonius was a first century miracle worker (whose story and activities are similar to the one told in the Christian gospels, yet also of other "divine men" in the Hellenistic world). The gospels and Christianity seems to provide a Hellenistic argument that the hurdles of God's covenant, which separates the Jews from mankind, must be overcome.

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. 10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

A new order (on the Hellenistic model) and era was needed that would break the separateness of Jews from gentiles, and a new god which would rule and embrace all, unhindered by offensive folk beliefs like those of Israel, who matched in the supernatural realm the salvation Rome had brought to the terrestrial realm. A heavenly gospel (*euangelion*, i.e., evangel) was devised to match Rome's gospel.

Whereas the Providence which has guided our whole existence and which has shown such care and liberality, has brought our life to the peak of perfection in giving Augustus Caesar, whom it [Providence] filled with moral virtue [*arête*] for the welfare of mankind, and who, being sent to us and our descendants as a savior [*soter*], has put an end to war and has set all things in order, and whereas, having become visible [*phaneis*, i.e., now that a God has become visible]...; and whereas, finally that the birthday of the God (viz., Caesar Augustus) has been for the whole world a beginning of the gospel [*euangelion*] concerning him, (therefore, let all reckon a new era beginning from the date of his birth) (Helms: 1988, p. 24).

Thus we see the Hellenistic ideas adopted by Christians, and hardly the authentic teaching of Yeshua in the tale above. Many will indeed come from east and west to become Jews as anticipated by Zechariah (8), but they will cleave to Israel, not replace it and see it cast into outer darkness as the Christian redactor wishes.

Evyonut is not a new age religion. The faith given to Israel by God will more than satisfy our spiritual needs, and its proclamation of liberty through God's Torah far exceeds that of Christianity and other new age religions. Ebionites reject the ideas against circumcision expressed in pagan attacks on the practice, recognizing circumcision as one of God's eternal commandments.

Jews Need No Conversion

The Ebionites go to the stones and not the sons. A son who is disobedient has little to boast of in being a son of Avraham basing his claim on heredity; yet, someone who is not descended from Avraham can repent, embrace the Torah, be circumcised and immersed even if he were once a stone with a stony, uncircumcised heart. In the same way, both a circumcised foreskin and heart are required for Ebionites. One without the other is not sufficient. In fact, many people circumcise the male foreskin. The mark alone does not distinguish one as a Yahwist. It is an acknowledgement of a commitment to live by Yahweh's commandments.

It is our feeling that a child not circumcised on the eighth day must be immersed as a convert whether his father or mother were

Jews, or not, and those circumcised without religious purpose, that is, in acknowledgement of God's commandments, must undergo *hatafat dam b'rit*. In this symbolic circumcision a drop of blood is shed from the foreskin.

The passage commanding circumcision also talks about males from the son of a stranger (*nēkār* -foreigner, and here -outsider *to the people in covenant*) obtained with money. This can be seen as an injunction to allow only the circumcised into the family enterprise (Avraham was a businessman, and his family and employees were the company he ran. It does not mention them as religious converts, but describes them as servants elsewhere. Yet they participated in a painful religious initiation. This group of people with Avraham is also a model for a community in a system of covenant reciprocity, which Yahwism requires.)

Uncircumcised males may not under any circumstances participate in the Passover. This puts an interesting perspective on non-Jewish "Passover seders" performed as a popular entertainment in churches during their spring rituals.

Paul of Tarsus and Circumcision

Circumcision is the blood covenant between God and mankind as embraced by Avraham and his descendants, Israel (and Ishmael also!). Paul of Tarsos claims to have been a student of the great *nasi* Gamali'el, a leader among the rabbis of the time. They had a biblically oriented, high opinion of the covenant of circumcision:

R. Ele'azer ben Azaryah says, Repulsive is the uncircumcised state whereby the idolators are held up to disgrace, as it is said, *For all the nations are uncircumcised*. R. Ishmael says, Great is circumcision whereby the covenant was established thirteen times. R. Yose says, Great is circumcision since it overrides the stricture of Shabbat. R. Y'hoshua ben Qarḥah says, Great is circumcision since it was not suspended for Mosheh the righteous one for so long as an hour. R. Neḥemyah says, Great is circumcision which supercedes the laws of leprosy. Rabbi says, Great is circumcision for in spite of all the virtues that Avraham our father fulfilled he was not called perfect (*shalem*), as it is said, *Walk before me and be thou perfect (tamiym)*. Another illustration of the supreme importance of circumcision: were it not for it the Holy One, Blessed Be He, would not have created His universe, as it is said, *Thus saith the Eternal, If My covenant be not day and night I had not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth*.

—m. Nedarim 3.11

Could it have been Gamali'el who taught Paul his attitude toward God's covenant of circumcision? It is hardly possible that he is telling the truth. We have told a number of Christians that Paul of Tarsus had such a distorted, evil opinion of Yahweh's covenant with Israel—that is the covenant mark of circumcision (*b'rit mila*) that he wished that the knife of circumcision would slip and cut off their penis. They are astounded and quickly claim that they have never read such a thing in Paul! They probably haven't. Here's why.

The English Christian Bible they read may not clearly translate the Greek and perhaps purposely disguise Paul's loveless wish.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

—Galatians 5

The actual word for "they were even cut off" in the *AV* (ἀποκοπτω) means "amputate" while *Thayers Lexicon* (used by Christians) explains: "*ophelon kai apokospontai* —I would that they (who urge the necessity of circumcision would not only circumcise themselves, but) would even mutilate themselves (or cut off their privy parts)..."

A better translation is "I wish they who harass you would amputate themselves." In other words, 'I wish the circumcisers would cut off their penises.'

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

-Philippians 3

Here the word given as "recision" is Greek κατατομή. It means to "cut up, mutilate". Continuing, he mocks circumcision in a hateful wordplay on περιτομή, the Greek word for circumcision. "Beware of the hackers, for we are (real) circumcision," captures the sense of the statement. Is it any wonder he describes those in covenant with God (according to His commandment of circumcision as the mark between Him and His own people, Israel) as "dogs" and "workers of evil"? Then he repeats that circumcision—against the word of God Himself—means nothing! He claims the uncircumcised replace God's People.

What kind of person, knowing scripture and God's commandments concerning circumcision, could ever say such things? Paul's authority came from his own imagination, over and above Yeshua or God to promote Hellenism and cast God's People into *outer darkness*. Today the Christian religion follows these delusions of Paul rather than Yeshua or God.

Paul claims that a spiritual belief is equal to circumcision before God. Of course, this is a lie. God does call also for a circumcised heart to accompany physical circumcision—not instead of circumcision. To be uncircumcised in the flesh means to be outside of covenant with God. But there were also others who practiced circumcision, and a circumcised heart was to distinguish the Israelite.

Upon Egypt and upon Judah, And upon Edom, and upon the sons of Ammon, And upon Moab, And upon all the clipped beards, The dwellers in the desert,—For, all the nations, are uncircumcised, And, all the house of Israel, are uncircumcised in heart.

-Jer. 9:26

What was circumcision and uncircumcision of the heart? While circumcision was the physical act of covenant, obeying God's commandments was circumcision of the heart. Disregarding them placed the Israelite on the basis of Edom, Ammon, Mo'av and other heathen people who circumcised without acknowledging the God of Israel through His commandments, as Yirmeyah says. Without Torah the heart is uncircumcised....

¹⁵And if, my statutes, ye refuse, And, my regulations, your souls shall abhor,—So that ye will not do all my commandments, But shall break my covenant ¹⁶I also, will do this unto you—I will set over you, for terror, consumption and fever, Causing the eyes to fail and the soul to pine away,—And ye shall sow, in vain, your seed, for it shall be eaten by your foes. ¹⁷And I will set my face against you, And ye shall be smitten before your foes,—And be trodden down by them who hate you, And shall flee when no one is pursuing you....

⁴⁰Then shall they confess their iniquity, And the iniquity of their fathers, In their unfaithfulness wherewith they had been unfaithful towards me; Yea moreover, because they had gone in opposition to me, ⁴¹I also, must needs go in opposition to them, and bring them into the land of their foes,—Save only that, if, even then, their **uncircumcised heart** shall be humbled, And, even then, they shall accept as a payment the punishment of their iniquity, ⁴²Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob Yea moreover, my covenant with Isaac, Yea moreover, my covenant with Abraham, will I remember; And the land, will I remember. ⁴³For, the land, shall be left of them, And shall be paid her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them, They also, accepting, as a payment, the punishment of their iniquity, Because, yea because, my regulations, they refused, And my statutes, their soul abhorred. ⁴⁴And yet even so when they are in the land of their foes I have not refused them Neither have I abhorred them To make an end of them, To break my covenant with them,—For, I—Yahweh, am their God. ⁴⁵Therefore will I remember in their behalf the covenant of their ancestors,—Whom, I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God—I—Yahweh. ⁴⁶These are the statutes and the regulations and the laws, which Yahweh granted between himself, and the sons of Israel,—in Mount Sinai by the mediation of Moses.

-Lev 26

Both circumcision and a circumcised heart is what God asks. When we circumcise our hearts through His commandments He restores us and remembers the circumcision of the flesh.

Is there a case when those physically uncircumcised will be accepted in the presence of God, fit to enter the holy precincts of the Temple? It looks like someone besides Paul of Tarsus tried to bring gentiles into the House of Yahweh and God was not happy about it.

⁶So then thou shalt say unto the perverse *house* unto the house of Israel, Thus saith My Lord, Yahweh: Let it more than suffice you Out of all your abominations, O house of Israel: ⁷That ye brought in the sons of the foreigner Uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, To be in my sanctuary. So that be profaned my house, That ye brought near as my food the fat and the blood, And so they brake my covenant—Among all your abominations; ⁸Neither kept ye the charge of my holy things, But ye did set men to be keepers of my charge in my sanctuary, for your own pleasure, ⁹Thus saith My Lord, Yahweh, No son of a foreigner Uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary,—of any son of a foreigner, who is in the midst of the sons of Israel.

-Ezk 44

In spite of the biblical teaching and God's commandment concerning circumcision, Christianity attacked this sign of Covenant with God. What could cause it to reject God's commandments? The gentiles held negative beliefs about circumcision. They saw circumcision as a mutilation and deformity. Jews could not participate in athletic games or public baths because they were "deformed." Roman author Martial lambasted Jews in the baths whose penis was fibulated (the foreskin tied or held closed by a pin) or had lost its *fibula*, exposing the head of the penis at the public bath (Martial, *Epigrams* 7.35, 82). Participants competed in the nude, and this, aside from being immoderate to many Jews, revealed their circumcised penises. Both the games and the baths were important institutions of Hellenistic society where important connections were made (pun intended) and political and commercial ventures transpired. It was suspicious if one did not attend these and perhaps betrayed Jews to the ridicule of their gentile neighbors. In Hellenistic culture, to expose the glans (the "head") of the penis was gross indecency, as the glans of the uncircumcised penis is exposed in the sex act. Nudity was seen as the celebration of the perfection and beauty of the human body. (*Gymnos* as in gymnasium, means nude.) Louis Feldman says that of all Jewish differences circumcision was the only practice that had no pagan admirers or defenders (1993, p. 158). The emperor Hadrian outlawed circumcision. Circumcised men could not become citizens of some Greek towns (Maccabees 2:30-31, 3, 21, 7:10-15; Tcherikover: 1959, pp. 311, 313.) and were deprived of important privileges, it jeopardized escape of rebelling Jews when their circumcision gave them away (during the war against occupation 66-70 CE), and made it almost impossible to easily blend into pagan society if they left their faith. Paul was part of the Gentile hatred toward circumcision, and knew he could not obtain gentile followers by being true to God.

It is true some Jews tried to circumvent the covenant of circumcision for selfish reasons. The temptation to avoid circumcision due to gentile criticism was present. In the Talmud there seems to be a discussion on whether circumcision is necessary (*Yevamot* 72a), and although it is, that discussion was needed is surprising. *Menahot* 53b tells us that Jerusalem fell and the Temple was destroyed because Jews broke covenant by failing to circumcise their sons. (Other reasons are given in other sources.) The sages also combated a type of circumcision that kept a "nicked" foreskin by requiring circumcision to expose the glans (*mShabbat* 30.6). In order to fit in socially with gentiles, some Jews underwent a procedure called *epispasm*, which stretched their remaining foreskin back over the glans of the penis (1 Mac 1.11-15).

Even uncircumcised males with short foreskins were taunted, and they too might undergo a version of *epispasm* where the skin at the pelvic area was cut, and skin pulled forward over the shaft of the penis to create more foreskin. Epispasm for a circumcised man involved cutting the skin around the glans and pulling the skin of the penis shaft forward, and then (it was hoped) the skin would reattach itself to the glans. The ancient physician Celsus tells us that it was not too very painful (*De Medicina* 7.25.1). The operation of circumcision was surely less painful. Epispasm (*mashuk*) drew reaction from observant Jews, and the Talmud and Maimonides (who lived during Christian times showing that epispasm was still resorted to by some Jews under Christian rule) says that *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Purgation) would not rid the sinner of the sin of epispasm, nor did they deserve life in the resurrection (*Yoma* 85b; *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Teshuvah* 3.6). Yet some sages ruled that a man could be re-circumcised and welcomed back to the Jewish community (*Yevamot* 72a; *Tosefta Shabbat* 15.9).

Whatever the case for Jews of the diaspora living daily in the gentile world or others who had become Hellenized and accustomed to allegorizing scripture in the Greek manner and reading the Torah in Greek, to undermine the covenant requirement of circumcision and other laws, the root of the problem was estrangement from their own faith and a longing to fit into gentile society. Jews found this to be no avail since the time came when, in order to appease the gentiles, they would be required to reject the entire faith of Israel that gave them circumcision and embrace Christianity. This was more than most Jews were willing to do, thank God. They came to see that abandoning circumcision was just a first step away from God. This is why Ebionites reject the idea that there is a spiritual continuity between Jews and Christians, and that there can be compromise of degrees between the faith of Scripture and a "new" testament which damns the faith of God. Christianity is never satisfied until Jews are "lovingly" subdued and no longer exist.

Yeshua and Social Justice

The additional source from Luke shows Yahhanan espousing the same social economic justice as Yeshua later does. Yahhanan is depicted here calling the Pious (*p'rushim*) and Temple personnel a "brood of vipers." Why?

We now know that Yeshua and Yahhanan's preaching, if they were the same since we see only a vignette of Yahhanan here, was socially and economically directed. But what of a brood of snakes? Yeshua's own people appear to be demonic minions to Christians who embrace a dualistic theology complete with serpent demons who ensnare the souls of mankind. Such dualistic ideas have provided a support for persecution and genocidal attacks on Jews for two thousand years.

During the time of Yeshua, a sin of the Pious and the puppet Zadoqite priesthood at Jerusalem was an embrace of Roman outlook on economy based on exploitation and opportunism. Priests (*kohanim*), who had no ancestral territory, were becoming rich with sumptuous quarters in the holy city and country estates. The high priest was a Roman appointee. Meanwhile, "scribes" were enacting provisions to the Torah that extended debt (the *prosbul*), putting aside economic justice in the year of release and return (Sabbatical and Jubilee years). In Western society interest (usury) figures strongly in economic ideology, but in Yahwistic society it is a sin and rejection of the Yahwistic worldview. Strangely enough, the Hebrew word for charging interest is *noshek*, from *neshek* "interest," from *nashak*, a bite from a snake. These "snakes" were biting vipers, men of high status participating in a foreign system exploiting the poor with usury as well as taxation. (In the modern world, Islam condemns usury, to its credit and honor, while the Christian West feeds off the misfortunes of the usured poor, and all too often assisted by Jews.)

Their sin was not in being Jews, but in not fully keeping the Torah while professing to be religious authorities and pious. Interestingly, the mediaeval *Shem Tov* text says Yahhanan demands complete repentance (עשו פרי תשובה השלמה). The word used in the *Shem Tov* text is *shlamah*, derived from the Hebrew word *shalom*, much clearer than the English "perfect." It means *completeness, wholeness, wellness and peace*, and so repentance must address the complete Torah in all its moral ramifications in order to bring completeness to us. All Pharisees were not collaborators with the Zadoqite Jerusalem priesthood and the Romans, and in many ways the Pharisees were sensitive to the poor and were poor themselves. It was perhaps more useful to blur distinctions and accuse all Pharisees as well as the priests in the anti-Jewish program of the Pauline Church.

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The Chris⁺tian NAZI⁺



Christians and the Holocaust: Part 1

You may be aware of the German efforts to first disenfranchise and eventually perpetrate genocide against the Jews of Europe in what has become known as the Holocaust. We wonder what kind of evil lunatics could do such a thing, and think of the insanity of Adolf Hitler and his henchmen. But Hitler was not alone by any means. He had the German people, fine upstanding Christians who knew of and supported the ideas that allowed millions of men, women and children to be exterminated, many taking an active part in the murders and atrocities.

While the elite of the National Socialists of Germany promoted Norse Aryan neo-pagan ideas and distanced themselves from the Christian churches, many more devoted Nazis were deeply devoted Christians who actually saw the Nazi Party as a means to strengthen German Christianity and their fatherland.



While perhaps Christians of other nations might see their faith in a spiritual way transcendent of the world or individual nations, Germans did not. The spiritual “universal” church was something of the next world for Germans while their church was strongly tied to the land and blood of the German people united. There was a fanatical patriotism to the nation and the idea of the German race as distinct from other peoples. Unlike some countries which officially separate church from state, this was seen as something unholy in Germany where church and state were clearly allied and any other arrangement would be fought as a rejection of both religion and state.

Since the Reformation German Protestant Christianity had been made up of regional churches strongly combined entities of geography, baptized believers, and its secular ruler, and within these provinces already existed a long history ingrained in the people reaching back to tribal days joining all of the German *volk* as one people idealized as a *Volkskirche* (People’s Church). The ideas of race and racial purity long preceded the Nazis, and were equated with church and spiritual purity. When the defeat at the hands of the Allies in 1918 ending the First World War destabilized Germany and its political-religious structures such as the abdication of the German Kaiser and removal of provincial princes (who were also heads of the provincial churches), many Germans felt strongly threatened by what they considered a separation of church from state. This also brought a period of national shame of German defeat, chaos, and decadence to Germany from which Germans sought deliverance. This new secularism caused a further exaggeration of the importance of German ethnicity and culture in order to preserve it in

the face of non-German Christian intrusion and domination. German Christianity became strongly defined by German blood and pure German culture. While they dreamed of a pure Aryan church (a term used before Hitler and Nazism), Hitler walked into a clean house already prepared by the German people to receive his racist extremism and final solution to create a pure Aryan state.

Other ways in which state and church were strongly tied was in education and church government itself because religious education was offered in public schools and religious universities and seminaries were state sponsored, and the church government received and spent tax dollars collected by the state from church members. Eventually the Hitler government tried to distance itself from Christianity, but at first it created a Reich Church Minister position, benefitted greatly from Christian support, and always had many party members, particularly soldiers and storm troopers as members of the churches. The *German Christian Movement* founded in the late 1920's by two Nazi Party member pastors, Siegfried Leffler and Julius Leutheuser of Thuringia, united many Protestant Germans strongly behind Hitler's vision of Aryan racism and elimination of Jews. And in the July 1933 church elections, pro-Nazi *German Christian* candidates took two thirds of the votes in the record turnout filling a whole range of church positions throughout Germany. Hitler even took to the airwaves in support of German Christian candidates. Those in support of the movement came from all levels and occupations. Just the year before politicians, pastors, and laypeople had met in Berlin to organize efforts to capture the energy of Germany's Protestant churches for the Nazi cause. A half million Germans would identify themselves as part of this movement as well as other Christians supporting National Socialism.



German Christian members and quiet sympathizers did not break from their Protestant churches, and members could be found in Protestant governing bodies as well as in the pulpit of parish churches where they disseminated their message to members and non-members weekly. There were also many similar or splinter type Christian groups that closely aped the German Christian program. Their political church foe might be considered to be the Confessing Church, and although theologians Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (later executed by the Nazis) and others bitterly opposed this Nazi Aryan Christian movement, the opposition was not necessarily based on sympathy towards non-Aryans or non-Christians.

But the *Confessing Christian* Movement held to the belief in authority of all Christian Scripture and promoted the idea that "Church must remain Church!" This was the main line of contention between the two movements. The *German Christians* were so anti-Judaic that they reconfigured their Christianity into a nationalistic racial entity which denied Jewish elements in the Christian New Testament, the Old Testament in many cases, and a Jewish Jesus as well as the Christian apostle Paul of Tarsus. Their Christianity was totally transformed to support National Socialism. In 1939 *German Christians* and others penned the *Godesberger Erklärung* (Godesberg Declaration) which clearly stated that Christianity was the *irreconcilable enemy of the Jewish Faith*. This means that even *Confessing Church* members could still support anti-Jewish ideas yet embrace the full Christian canon of Scripture, especially since the history of anti-Judaism among Christians is a long and bloody one indeed.

In the Germany of Hitler and of nationalistic Christians restoring the purity of the German faith and volk, the Christianity of the ancient Church Fathers came to full fruition concerning Jews and Judaism. If one finds the anti-Jewish writings of Paul of Tarsus ambiguous, they need only look to the patristic writings of Tertullian (*Adversus Judaeos*), Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho*), Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* ii.6), Chrysostom (*Adversus Judaeos: Eight Homilies Against the Jews of Antioch; Homily 53-55 Gos. John; Homily on Galatians*), Augustine (*City of God* XX.27-30; *Tractates on Gos. John* 42-43), Ambrose (*Epistles* 40,41), and others to learn the rich heritage of Christian hate towards Jews or the Christian emperors for anti-Jewish legislation that the Church nurtured for centuries which the Nazis reinstituted after a brief respite when the Church lost some of its power in the Age of Reason.

It is true that Christianity is the irreconcilable opponent of biblical religion, as the Nazi Christians admitted. Germany distinguished itself in the Middle Ages with hatred towards Jews. When the first Crusade was begun in 1096, "infidels" (non-Christians including Jews as well as Muslims) were set upon and thousands of Jews of the Rhineland died. Besides the occasional programs to punish the "killers of God" in Germany (as well as other regions of Christian Europe), the first accusation of desecration of the host occurred in Germany, in Belitz near Berlin soon after Fourth Lateran Council 1215 when it was declared the communion wafer and wine of the Mass to be the literal body and blood of the Christian god. (Jews were accused of mistreating communion wafer—that is, the body of Jesus—which would bleed or cry out in pain, alerting nearby Christians!)

The German father of Protestantism and the Germanic church which bears his name, Martin Luther, preaches in his book *On the Jews and their Lies*, that they were "venomous beasts, vipers, disgusting scum, canders, devils incarnate".

Here is a sampling of the Father German Protestantism from whom the murderers of millions of Jews and others spiritually descend.

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves. Vengeance a thousand times worse than we could wish them already has them by the throat. I shall give you my sincere advice:

First to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians. For whatever we tolerated in the past unknowingly - and I myself was unaware of it - will be pardoned by God. But if we, now that we are informed, were to protect and shield such a house for the Jews, existing right before our very nose, in which they lie about, blaspheme, curse, vilify, and defame Christ and us (as was heard above), it would be the same as if we were doing all this and even worse ourselves, as we very well know.

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead they might be lodged under a roof or in a barn, like the gypsies. This will bring home to them that they are not masters in our country, as they boast, but that they are living in exile and in captivity, as they incessantly wail and lament about us before God.

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them. (remainder omitted)

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. For they have justly forfeited the right to such an office by holding the poor Jews captive with the saying of Moses (Deuteronomy 17 [:10 ff.]) in which he commands them to obey their teachers on penalty of death, although Moses clearly adds: "what they teach you in accord with the law of the Lord." Those villains ignore that. They wantonly employ the poor people's obedience contrary to the law of the Lord and infuse them with this poison, cursing, and blasphemy. In the same way the pope also held us captive with the declaration in Matthew 16 [:18], "You are Peter," etc, inducing us to believe all the lies and deceptions that issued from his devilish mind. He did not teach in accord with the word of God, and therefore he forfeited the right to teach.

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like. Let them stay at home....

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. The reason for such a measure is that, as said above, they have no other means of earning a livelihood than usury, and by it they have stolen and robbed from us all they possess. Such money should now be used in no other way than the following: Whenever a Jew is sincerely converted, he should be handed one hundred, two hundred, or three hundred florins, as personal circumstances may suggest. With this he could set himself up in some occupation for the support of his poor wife and children, and the maintenance of the old or feeble. For such evil gains are cursed if they are not put to use with God's blessing in a good and worthy cause.

Seventh, I commend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen 3[:19]). For it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away



their time behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat. No, one should toss out these lazy rogues by the seat of their pants.

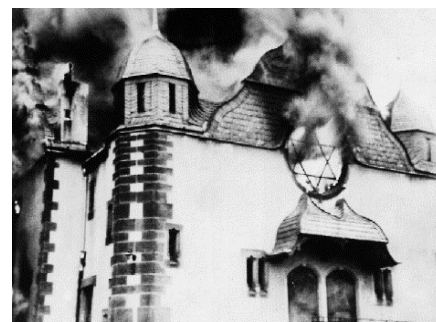
Is it any wonder that the date of the infamous date of *Kristallnacht* on which Jews, their homes, synagogues and businesses were attacked by Germans, November 10, 1938, was the birthday of Martin Luther? Christian leaders hardly condemned the attacks, and some approved of this pogrom against Jews of Germany. Martin Sasse, wrote: *"On the 10th of November, 1938, on Luther's birthday, the synagogues burned in Germany. ... This is the hour when the voice of the man must be heard - the German prophet of the 16th century - who out of naiveté began as a friend of the Jews but, prompted by his conscience, driven by experience and reality, became the major antisemite of his time and warned his people against the Jews".*

"The *Deutsches Gemeinschaftsblatt* of the mainline Lutheran Church published a "Word about the Events of the 8th-10th of November". There it says, among other things: *"The Jew is to be regarded as a 'terrible hater'. That lies in his particular nature ... ever since the time when he condemned Jesus Christ and brought him to the cross with a downright satanic hatred"*. After it had warned of the *"eternal, malign and pernicious World Jewry"* and of its *"plan, followed with tenacity and great guile, for a more-or-less visible Jewish world domination"*, it went on to assert: *"We find ourselves literally in a war with world Jewry. Only with this perception can we attain a clear and correct view of what is transpiring."*

From this it was concluded: *"Wars must be waged with the means that hit the enemy the hardest, and even annihilate him. That is simply the fearful purpose of war.... But when the Jewish-democratic press of foreign countries act as if fearful cruelties have been practised by us, that is simply not true".... "The most vulnerable points for the Jew ... are his synagogues and his money. What money signifies to the Jew, everyone knows, but not what the synagogue means to him. This is not only a religious shrine, it is also a Jewish clubhouse where completely different things are done as non-Jews assume."* This hate-filled text from a church bulletin could just as well have stood in a Nazi propaganda sheet like *Der Stürmer*. (<http://www.secularism.org.uk/churchgermany.html>)"

Speaking of *Der Stürmer*, a notorious Nazis publication, its writer Julius Streicher, when on trial at Nuremberg after the Second World War, made the reasonable case that Martin Luther should be on trial as much as he. But Martin Luther was only continuing in the anti-Jewish teaching of the Christian Church, and both Luther and Christianity deserved to stand on trial at Nuremberg, guilty of inspiring genocide.

Hitler did use Christian support in the beginning deliberately, but later distanced himself and the state from direct support of the churches. He was afraid of anything that could have a hold on the German people other than himself and his agendas. Yet, Hitler's Germany attacked the Jewish people legally before implementing his "Final Solution" not with new laws but those of earlier Christian governments and Church Canon Law re-instituted by secular Nazism.



"My feelings as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. . . ." (Adolf Hitler, Munich, April 12, 1922)

"Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord." (Adolf Hitler *Mein Kampf*)

Let there be no mistake. Hitler was a devout Christian and maintained close connections to Roman Catholic leaders from the beginning and throughout his reign. One wonders if the reason for Hitler's distancing from direct support of church as part of state had something to do with his Catholic leanings in a Lutheran Protestant land and his need of Lutheran support. In that way, Hitler would look impartial and enjoy support from both types of Christian churches. But this article is not about Hitler but of the Christians who supported him and the destruction of European Jewry. The treatment of Jews in the German Reich, by the Christian people of Germany was the continuation of Christianity's treatment of the Jewish People.



We have already noted the Godesberger Erklärung of the German Christians. But other non-German Christian churches, of the perhaps less extreme kind, also made a clear statement concerning the importance of race purity (i.e., pure of Jews)

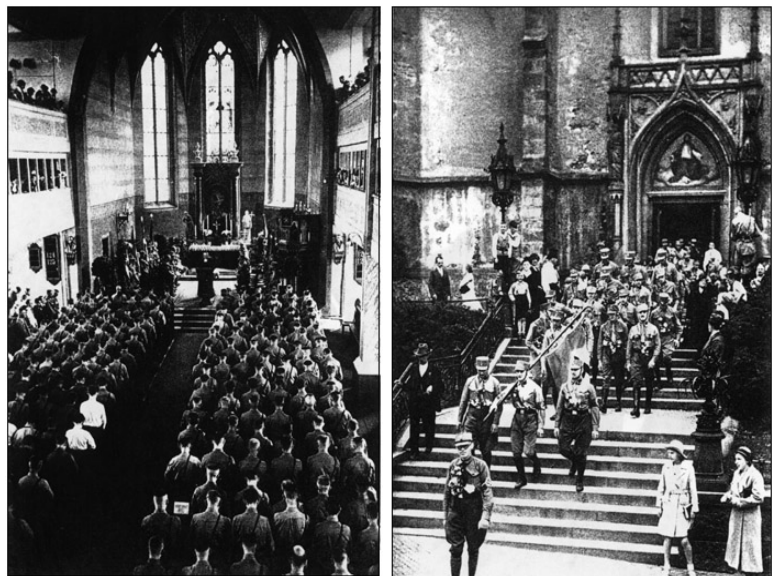
A statement intended to soften the Godesberg Declaration by other Protestant church representatives (of Kurhessen-Waldeck, Hanover, Braunschweig, and Aurich), *Grundsätze für eine den Erfordernissen der Gegenwart entsprechende Neuordnung der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche* of May 24, 1939 makes a case for the gospel to all people—but that, in the tradition of Luther, “true Christian faith (in Germany) could only unfold in all its power within the *Volk* as created by God.” This is the same racial “blood” idea of the *German Christians*. It also supports the anti-Jewish sentiments found in Godesberg with the statement, “In the sphere of faith there is no sharper opposition than that between the message of Jesus Christ and the Jewish religion of legality with its hope for a political Messiah.”

The Germans emphasized race but isn't this language reminiscent of the Christian argument for its existence, pitting physical Jews against Christians (supposedly their replacements as the true Israel), Jews as choosing the literality of scripture concerning Torah and Messiah over the Christian “revelation” of their Christ, and Paul's scheme of Jews versus gentiles? The only new aspect is the emphasis on race. The only thing new added by the Germans to Christianity's discrimination and hate for Jews was the introduction of systematic state murder of Jews by a Christian land.

Some make the point of the German elite promoting neo-paganism, but the ancient tales of Norse heroes and gods was not a serious attempt to restore paganism, but to draw upon Germany's romantic past as an inspiration for racism, national pride and a rebirth of a warrior society. This was not a rejection of Christianity but a means of developing a more extreme nationalism. The *German Christian Movement* type Christianity most fully developed this idea but it also supported by most other Christians, Catholic and Protestant. Just as Protestant Christians wanted a state sponsored church, so did Catholics, and documents show this.

The official position of the Nazi party was originally a marriage of church and state. We see the same among Christian Fundamentalists in America today. Here is an excerpt from the 24th principle of the Nazi party, from the infamous *Twenty Five Points* (1920):

“We demand the freedom of religion in the Reich so long as they do not endanger the position of the state or adversely affect the moral standards of the German race. As such the Party represents a positively Christian position without binding itself to one particular faith.”



Documents show Catholics felt the same way. The 1933 Nazi *Concordat with the Catholic Church*, Article 21 shows the interest of Catholics and Nazis to cooperate on this issue:



“Catholic religious instruction in elementary, senior, secondary and vocational schools constitutes a regular portion of the curriculum, and is to be taught in accordance with the principles of the Catholic Church. In religious instruction, special care will be taken to inculcate patriotic, civic and social consciousness and sense of duty in the spirit of the Christian Faith and the moral code, precisely as in the case of other subjects.”

The Nazi Party members often frequented religious functions and there is little to make us think they were not sincere Christians. Even the infamous SS wore belt buckles that invoked God (*Gott mit Uns*, God is with us!). Church leaders also attended Nazi functions, and there are pictures of them giving the Nazi salute. The Nazi Reich also had its own (and only) official Reich's Minister, Protestant Ludwig Müller.

Nazi Laws as Reestablishment of Christian Law

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Prohibition of intermarriage and of sexual intercourse between Christians and Jews. Synod of Elvira, 306 b Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together. Synod of Elvira. 306 c Jews not allowed to hold public Office. Synod of Clermont, 535 d Jews not allowed to employ Christian servants or possess Christian slaves, 3rd Synod of Orleans, 538 e Jews not permitted to show themselves in the streets during Passion Week. 3 (1st Synod of Orleans, 538. f Burning of the Talmud and other books, 12th Synod of Toledo. 681 g Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors, Trullan Synod. 692 h Christians not permitted to live in Jewish homes, Synod of Narbonne, 1050 i Jews obliged to pay taxes for support of the Church to the same extent as Christians. Synod of Gerona, 1078 j Jews not permitted to be plaintiffs, or witnesses against Christians in the Courts, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 26 k Jews not permitted to withhold inheritance from descendants who had accepted Christianity, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 26 l The marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, 4th Lateran Council, 1215. Canon 68 (Copied from the legislation by Caliph Omar II [636-644], who had decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews, yellow belts) m Construction of new synagogues prohibited, Council of Oxford, 1222 n Christians not permitted to attend Jewish ceremonies, Synod of Vienna. 1267 o Compulsory ghettos. Synod of Breslau, 1267 p Christians not permitted to sell or rent real estate to Jews. Synod of Ofen, 1279 q Adoption by a Christian of the Jewish religion or return by a baptized Jew to the Jewish religion defined as a heresy. Synod of Mainz, 1310 r Jews not permitted to act as agents in the conclusion of contracts, especially marriage contracts between Christians. Council of Basel, 1434. Sessio XIX s Jews not permitted to obtain academic degrees. Council of Basel, 1434, Sessio XIX | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor. September 15, 1935 b Jews barred from dining cars (Transport Minister to Interior Minister, December 30, 1939) c Law for the Reestablishment of the Professional Civil Service. April 7, 1933 d Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor. September 15, 1935 e Decree authorizing local authorities to bar Jews from the streets on certain days (i.e. Nazi holidays), December 3, 1938 f Book burnings in Nazi Germany g Decree of July 25, 1938 h Directive by Göring providing for concentration of Jews in houses, December 28, 1938 (Bormann to Rosenberg, January 17, 1939) i The "Sozialausgleichsabgabe" which provided that Jews pay a special income tax in lieu of donations for Party purposes imposed on Nazis, December 24, 1940 j Proposal by the Party Chancellery that Jews not be permitted to institute civil suits, September 9, 1942 (Bormann to Justice Ministry, September 9, 1942) k Decree empowering the Justice Ministry to void wills offending the "sound judgment of the people," July 31, 1938 l Decree of September 1, 1941 to wear yellow stars. m Destruction of synagogues in entire Reich. November 10, 1938 (Heydrich to Göring. November 11, 1938) n Friendly relations with Jews prohibited. October 24, 1941 (Gestapo directive) o Order by Heydrich, September 21, 1939 p Decree providing for compulsory sale of Jewish real estate. December 3, 1938 q Adoption of the Jewish religion by a Christian places him in jeopardy of being treated as a Jew (Decision by Oberlandesgericht Königsberg. 4th Zivilsenat. June 26, 1942) r Decree of July 6, 1938. providing for liquidation of Jewish real estate agencies. brokerage agencies, and marriage agencies catering to non-Jews s Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities. April 25, 1933 |
|---|--|

(from Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of European Jews*. 1985)

If one carefully reads the evidence, the Nazis were a nationalistic, pro-Christian movement similar to other nationalistic religious-political movements that feel a special destiny in the Christian scheme of things. The religious right of the United States is similar in aim and fervor to the Nazis, with two main differences, thank God. While everyday Christians are divided culturally and stay active the nation cannot as easily be coerced by the other into extremism, and Christian fundamentalism is not overtly racist when it comes to faith, albeit, socially this is a problem. Christianity in America is theologically anti-Jewish in the same way as the Nazis, but this is because there are irreconcilable differences between the two faiths, as the Nazis admitted and Christian history and theology shows. But Jews are seen as targets for missionary work and not rejected as sub-human creatures to be used and eventually killed. In Holocaust Germany, non-Aryan Christians or Jewish converts to Christianity were not protected and still considered Jews and susceptible to extermination on the basis of race. American Fundamentalists are more interested perhaps in spiritually killing Jews.

American Christians do not want to believe that those who killed the Jews of Europe were Christians and this is more than likely reason that Nazis and Hitler are painted as pagans, perverts, or as anti-religion despots. They were Christians.

American Christians, in the author's personal experience, are fond of commenting on how they love the Jewish People, and that Jews are "God's People." Yes, we are the People of God. But also in personal experience these comments are of no consequence and worth little more than the air used in saying them as they have discriminated against us at every opportunity. The more they proclaim us the people of God, they must also acknowledge that as the people of God we reject their religion as unbiblical and theology as unsatisfactory for God's people.

Christians have to realize that their religion puts them at odds with God, and his People Israel. Christians must look at the fruits of history in which wars, atrocity, and even campaigns of genocide have been used in the name of "Jesus." Yeshua never taught these things and would not recognize the church and its fruits as being of God or according to his teachings. It is time for Christians to face up to its crimes and repent. The mistakes can end but cannot be corrected through Christianity. Christians need to turn to the God of Israel with a broken heart and sincere remorse for what they have done in God's name.

Next installment, *American Christians and the Holocaust*.



What killed millions of Jews? “...Christianity is the irreconcilable enemy of the Jewish Faith”

-Godesberger Erklärung (Godesberg
Declaration of the right wing German
Christians)



Suggested Reading, Part 1 :

Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German
Christian Movement in the Third Reich*.
Chapel Hill: 1996.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/games/
nazi_genocide_timeline/noflash.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/games/nazi_genocide_timeline/noflash.shtml)
<http://www.nobeliefs.com/Hitler1.htm>

Photo Descriptions

Page 14

[German caption: The touching and emotional end of the
rally in Vienna: Let us pray...] (Source: Hitler: The
Hoffmann Photographs, Vol. 1, Ray R. Cowdery, Ed., 1990)

Hitler leaves the Marine Church in Wilhelmshaven.
(Source: The German Propaganda Archive)

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Deutsche Christen religious procession. They were the
Christian “Right” of Germany.

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Kristallnacht photos: Synagogue burning Siegen, Germany;
Smashed windows of Jewish stores.



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Source: *Das Braune Heer: mit einem
geleitwort von Adolf Hitler* (Translation:
The Brown Army: with a foreword by
Adolf Hitler), Photos by Heinrich
Hoffmann. Hitler’s Brown Army
attending church.

Hitler honoring Catholic Cardinal and his Protestant
Reich Minister.

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Birthday Celebration: Catholic Bishops giving the Nazi
salute in honor of Hitler

Deutsche Christen rally.

Investiture of Ludwig Müller as Reich Church Bishop,
1933. (Source: Museum of Tolerance)

Cardinal Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli (later to
become Pope Pius XII) signs the Concordat between
Nazi Germany and the Vatican at a formal ceremony in
Rome on 20 July 1933 (Source: Wikipedia)

Hitler greets cardinal.

Welcome Celebration for Bishop Konrad Graf von
Preysing in the *Sportpalast*, Berlin, 8 Sept. 1935. Note
the Catholic Chi-Rho Cross to the right of the Nazi flag.
Chi and Rho are the first two letters of the Greek word
for Christ. The Chi Rho Cross, or warrior’s cross,
originated from the monogram of Roman Emperor
Constantine. (Photo source: Gedenkstätte Deutscher
Widerstand)

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Hitler at Nazi party rally. Photo taken in Nuremberg,
Germany (circa 1928). (Source: 20th Century History)

Let's Be Honest about Male + Male Sex

It is not okay!

Are you shocked that homosexuals are being given the legal right to marry? Do you have a right to be shocked? Perhaps, you do not.

In God's Torah we are given some clear instructions concerning homosexuality and other perversions:

22 וְאֵת-זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִנְשֻׁכְבִּי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הִוא: וּבְכָל-בְּהֵמָה לֹא-תִתֵּן שְׁכָבְתָּךְ לְטָמְאָהּ-כֹּה וְאִשָּׁה לֹא-תַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה תָּכֵל הִוא: אֶל-טָמְאֹו בְּכָל-אֵלֶּה כִּי בְּכָל-אֵלֶּה נְטִמָּו הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְשַׁלַּח מִפְּנֵיכֶם: וְהַטָּמֵא הָאָרֶץ וְאִפְקֹר עֲוֹנָה עָלֶיהָ וְהִקָּא הָאָרֶץ אֶת-יֹשְׁבֶיהָ:

A male you must not lie with as you lie with a woman; it is abhorrent perversion. Or with any beast you must not allow yourself to lie with thus becoming unclean through her; nor may you position a female before a beast for copulation; it is filthy perversion. Defile yourselves in none of these; indeed, in all of these the gentiles, who I drove out before you, defiled themselves. So the land was unclean and I attended to the iniquity upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. (Wayyiqra' 18:22-25; Translation mine.)

10 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְהוּ מוֹת-יוֹמָת הַנָּאֵף וְהַנָּאֶפֶת: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲבִיו עֶרְוַת אָבִיו גִּלָּה מוֹת-יוֹמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת-כַּלְתּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם תָּכֵל עָשׂוּ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת-זָכָר מִנְשֻׁכְבִּי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-אִמָּהּ זָמָה זָמָה הִוא בְּאֵשׁ יִשְׁרָפוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-הָיָה זָמָה בְּתוֹכָם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן שְׁכָבְתּוֹ בְּבֵהֵמָה מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה תִּהְרָגוּ: וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרַב אֶל-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה אֹתָהּ וְהִרְגָתָּ אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם:



The man who has sex with a(nother) man's woman (wife), who has sex with a

woman of his neighbor (comrade) they must die—the adulterer and adulteress. The man who lies with the woman of his father, exposing (her) genitals belonging to his father, the two of them must die—their blood upon them. The man who lies with his daughter-in-law, the two of them must die; they do perversion—their blood upon them. The man who lies with a male like lying with a woman, abhorrent perversion they do; they must die—their blood upon them. The man who takes a woman and her mother it is disgraceful evil; with fire burn them, he and they so there will be no disgraceful evil among you all. The man who allows himself to lie with a beast must die and the beast you must kill. The woman who comes near to any beast to allow copulation with her, kill the woman and the beast must die—their blood upon them. (Wayyiqra' 20:10-16; Translation mine.)

5 לֹא־יִהְיֶה כָּל־גֵּזֶל עַל־אִשָּׁה וְלֹא־יִלְבָּשׁ גֵּזֶר שְׂמֹלֶת אִשָּׁה כִּי תוֹעֵבָה
יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה:

There must not be male things on a woman; neither shall a man wear a woman's garments; indeed, all doing such are an abhorrent perversion of YHWH your God. (Devarim 22:5; Translation mine.)

This is not an exhaustive list of sexual crimes in the Torah but I have included other crimes for context around the descriptions of homosexual crime.

They way we look at such passages in Scripture and apply them in a societal way (or not apply them at all) can result from reason and analysis and our own needs. As belonging to a movement which embraces the Torah (*sh'biktav*) I take its prohibitions as valid and therefore want to analyze them in a way to understand their full meaning through context. My need is to be fully observant in conformity with all the provisions of all God's instruction. By including other "sex crimes" above, I want to be clear that although I am speaking primarily about homosexuality, this crime cannot be singled out while others are ignored.

Crime? I realize that today many societies are ignoring biblical Yahwistic legislation to satisfy the needs of its members who regularly engage in any number of sexual practices. Fortunately, we are not usually forced into participating in sexual practices we do not prefer, especially on a societal basis. On the other hand, the Torah allows practices that most modern societies dissuade or prosecute.

The Torah does not disallow *polygyny*, (having multiple wives). While the Torah specifically condemns the male homosexual act, it says nothing of sexual activity between females. It allows divorce (but also the divorce settlement to a divorced wife). It also calls for the *yibbum* which obligates a brother to take and give a child to his childless brother's widow (Breishiyt 38; Devarim 25). But the secular or religious West sees these as strange or unacceptable.

There are camps in the West that condemn homosexuality prompted by the biblical passages cited above, and their own scriptures. Some of them have an extreme view to kill homosexuals, damn them to hellfire, and make their lives a living hell in the meantime. I found an example of radically conservative Christians shown in the view Robert Lee of the *Society for the Practical Establishment and Perpetuation of the Ten Commandments*. In an essay "*Against Homosexuality*," he proposes legislation against gays and lesbians. Some of his thoughts are summed up below (from http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_legis.htm):

- 1) Homosexuals are individuals who engage in same-sex behavior.
- 2) Only the Judeo Christian God has the authority to define the nature of criminal acts.
- 3) All Americans -- Agnostics, Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Humanists, Jews, Muslims, Wiccans, etc. must follow the biblical laws of God.
- 4) Those who sympathize with homosexuals or who promote tolerance of persons of all orientations are also to be executed. (In other words, Lee is against the US Constitution, as it presently exists, and civil rights for non-adherents to his view.)
- 6) The Bible requires that all homosexuals are to be executed. (See above) and therefore, "...it is the God-given responsibility of corporeal governments to do the proper things to remove it from society."
- 7) The homosexual has a spiritual and moral defect which has no right of existence.
- 8) Homosexuality can be caused by demon possession, either before or after birth. Some are taught to be homosexual; others make a conscious choice to be homosexual.

9) Although Lee apparently opposes abortion access, he recommends that if a pregnant woman becomes aware that her fetus will be a homosexual, that she have an abortion! 10) Lee implies in his essay that homosexuals cannot be persuaded to remain celibate or to convert to heterosexuality. Instead, they must be exterminated.

To a person who wonders what should be done to a man who engages in sex with another man, the Torah is quite clear—they should be executed. It is described as an abhorrent perversion (*tô'ēbāh* abomination, something loathed). We could analyze why male to male sex is seen as abhorrent by scripture, but it is so simply stated that such analysis would be speculation. We could look at the importance of male sperm as a source of life for our speculation.

In Breishiyt 38 there is an incident used by many a parent to discourage masturbation, but this is not what the passage is about and the Bible is silent about masturbation. 'Er was a son Y'hudah who died without an heir, so his brother 'Onan was told to impregnate his brother's wife in order to produce an heir to carry on 'Er's family name. 'Onan did go to have sex with Tamar, but pulled out and spilled his seed on the ground instead. He had thus refused the custom of *yibbum* to “raise up seed” to his dead brother. A man with “crushed” testicles could not enter into sacred precincts to worship God (De 23:1). A man with an emission of semen was unclean until immersion (Le 15:32). In fact, those with a physical genetic flaw or damage could not officiate in the sacred precincts (Le 21:20ff). If one carefully examines the unclean categories in humans we might make a case that the reasoning has to do with death and the failure to become living even in regard to sperm and menses. Male to male sex could be both a perversion of nature and a denial of a life creating/maintaining act by wasting semen in another male. Again, speculation. But the commandment stands, regardless.

A few scholars have tried to insist that the Torah refers only to cultic homosexual acts. Gender confusion and homosexual acts have been noted in Mesopotamian religion and in later cults (that of Ishtar, and later that of the mutilated and castrated *galli* of the Great Mother cults; see Nissinen: 1998). This would indicate that only priests were prohibited from male to male sex while the society at large had no prohibition or aversion to such sex as perverse. But the stories of Lot and the men of S'dom, Noah and Ham clearly show otherwise, and that male to male sex was not only perverse but a decent man would offer a female family member in order to protect any male they were responsible for. Even Israel's neighbors recognized that such acts were most often an act of dominance perpetrated on a passive male performing the role of a female, and such acts were sometimes punishable by mutilation or death (Nissinen, pp. 24-28). But it is not fully clear whether homosexuality was condemned in all cases, or not. Some claim that the sin of S'dom involved was inhospitality. But if a homosexual act was acceptable, then it would not have been inhospitable to let the men of S'dom “know” Lot's visitors, would it?

The subject of masculinity and passivity are important. It could lie behind prohibitions in the Torah and that of neighboring peoples against homosexual intercourse, and also silence on female to female sex. The neighboring societies featured gods and goddesses. But in the biblical society males dominate and to impose a passive (female) role upon a male is seen as a perversion of the divinely set order in which females did not rule, serve as goddesses, neither were intercourse or fertility a feature of Yahwism. In the Mesopotamian cultures where prohibitions exist, imposing a role designated as female and passive was to destroy a male's honor. In fact homosexual rape was one of the practices used to humiliate captives in war.

Whatever modern argument is made toward mutuality of partners in a homosexual relationship, at least temporary dominance is involved while one partner must act in the female/ passive role. If one does not like the female/passive language, we still have a situation in which one partner penetrates, and “gives” while the other is penetrated and receives. That is what passive means in this context.

The Torah of God is an instrument of equality between men, and none should be subjected to a passive role in anything.

We cannot see any variation from a death sentence for homosexuality, and in that way we could be said to agree with the extremist Christian view. But there are some qualifications that must be considered which would put us at strong disagreement with such people.

First of all, who would be considered homosexuals to be killed? The Torah condemns an *act* perpetrated, male to male sexual intercourse which assumes a female/passive role. This particularly would be anal and probably oral sex which also creates the passive situation. This role is strongly used as an identifying criterion in the commandment. But the crime itself is confined to the act. While elsewhere we are clearly instructed against “cross-dressing,” we are not told that naturally effeminate males are to be condemned. We cannot punish a male for talking or walking in a typically female manner, having a “limp wrist” or playing

with dolls, and so on. Men in some cultures, ancient and modern have had deep abiding love for each other (Yonatan and Dawid, for example), kissing, embracing, or holding hands. In Christian literature a “holy kiss” is spoken of and kissing embraces are described (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; *et al.*). This was not a sexual act, or delivered in a sexual manner I do not believe. In the days of Avraham we have a description of an oath made by a servant while holding Avraham’s genitals (Ber 24:2, 9). Men can share many things and may have strong partnerships. But they cannot have sex according to Yahwistic religion.

Let us say that Mr. Lee goes hunting for homosexuals in order to execute them. Would he not circumvent existing privacy laws or break criminal law to burst into a home or rendezvous point? The laws of his *Christian* nation aren’t good enough? Also at least another male would be needed as witness to catch the men literally in the act. Otherwise, God does not call for an execution.

At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee. (Devarim 17:6-7, JPS 1917)

And according to Devarim 19:15 if that witness is discovered false then Mr. Lee receives the death sentence (in this case of the crime that he exposed). If homosexuals were aware of the law and possible death sentence, would it not be very difficult to catch events of male to male sex as it occurred? Or would Christian extremists just gather up anyone they suspected of being “gay”? There is no prohibition from God against “lesbians” other than dressing as a man, yet the Christian extremists want to kill them as well. By what authority? They would have to presume to create a new law without biblical authority.

Do we need “judges” who invent laws and who would execute people according to their own authority? What about “judges” who pick and choose only certain laws that suit them from the law book, in this case the Torah? Can Christians who are not bound by the Torah (depending on how they choose to interpret Paul of Tarsus on a particular day) be trusted to interpret and enforce Torah? That would be a disaster. Here are some Christian opinions on the Torah:

“Question: “Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?” Answer: The key to understanding this issue is knowing that the Old Testament law was given to the nation of Israel, not to Christians. Some of the laws were to make the Israelites know how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments for example), some of them were to show them how to worship God (the sacrificial system), some of them were to simply make the Israelites different from other nations (the food and clothing rules). None of the Old Testament law applies to us today. When Jesus died on the cross, He put an end to the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15). “

“Christians are not under the ten commandments (2 Cor. 3:4-11). According to this text the law of the ten commandments was a dispensation of death. The old law had to disappear to make room for a new spiritual dispensation of Christ. Read Hebrews chapter eight and notice verse 13. Jesus did not come to destroy the law (according to Mat. 5:17) but he did come to fulfill the law. When He fulfilled all things, when all had been finished (see verse 18) the old law became obsolete. Jesus established a new covenant that is better. Read the sermon on the mount in Matthew five to see how the commandments of Jesus exceed the old law.”

“It is plain that if to be under the law were the means of Christian holiness, it would have said, “ye are under the law,” rather than “ye are not under the law.”

But men are blinded. Though they constantly take up the Ten Commandments, repeat them, and teach them, yet they say they are not under the law! How could persons be more under the law than when they adopt the language of the Ten Commandments as the expression of their own relationship before God? The moment you put Christians under the law as that by which they have to walk, you are doing the very evil that the Epistle to the Galatians was intended to correct.”

Yet extremist Christians would pinch a commandment out of the Torah they speak so disparagingly about in order to kill a substantial number of the population! This seems at best hypocritical. I wonder who else they would kill.

I recently saw a newscast that reported a Knoxville, Tennessee woman and “friend” whose relationship had become suspicious

in a local church congregation. The point is that she was sent a letter asking her not to attend under the situation. Clergymen were consulted about how their church would treat adulterers or those suspected. The responses, including one from a Conservative rabbi, were that such a matter was basically none of their business and that the matter would be between those individuals and God. I am not sure which Christians would respond to assorted Torah commandments or how, whether to sidestep the issue, ignore them completely, or want to send the transgressors to death row. I can clearly state that I know many Christian adulterers, and I have never seen adulterers attacked in the same manner or with the same venom that homosexuals have been by Christians. Jews have not launched any recent anti-adultery campaigns or called for a death sentence of which I am aware.

Jews are not under the illusion that a Torah nation exists in which to implement Torah fully. Israel is not a Torah nation. Christian or Muslim nations are absolutely not lands which seriously considers biblical legislation except in the way being illustrated in this article—as an exercise in selective law keeping by people who admit they have little use of the Torah.

Christianity has a thin rationale in its writings to condemn homosexual activity.

1:24 Wherefore also God did give them up, in the desires of their hearts, to uncleanness, to dishonour their bodies among themselves; 25 who did change the truth of God into a falsehood, and did honour and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed to the ages. Amen. 26 Because of this did God give them up to dishonourable affections, for even their females did change the natural use into that against nature; 27 and *in like manner also the males having left the natural use of the female, did burn in their longing toward one another; males with males working shame*, and the recompense of their error that was fit, in themselves receiving. 28 And, according as they did not approve of having God in knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mind, to do the things not seemly; 29 having been filled with all unrighteousness, whoredom, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil dispositions; whisperers, 30 evil-speakers, God-haters, insulting, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 unintelligent, faithless, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; 32 who the righteous judgment of God having known—that those practising such things are worthy of death—not only do them, but also have delight with those practising them. 2:1 Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man—every one who is judging—for in that in which thou dost judge the other, thyself thou dost condemn, for the same things thou dost practise who art judging, 2 and we have known that the judgment of God is according to truth, upon those practising such things. 3 And dost thou think this, O man, who art judging those who such things are practising, and art doing them, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? (*Romans, Young's Literal Translation*)

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (*1Cor 6, Young's Literal Translation*)

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for *them that defile themselves with mankind*, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. (*1 Timothy 1, Young's Literal Translation*)

Perhaps, since the Bible (which Christians call Old Testament) is much clearer on prohibiting the male homosexual act, Christians may need to buttress their writings. This is especially true when their writings both judge then condemn judging.

What are we to surmise reading such proclamations of condemnation? Christians are not under the Torah of God, but instead Paul and other Christians feel just in compiling lists of people to be criticized or damned, some coincidental with Torah while elsewhere harsher than Torah, all while discounting Torah. Modern Christianity reflects this jumble of proscriptions, each denomination and even church declaring what God hates according to some obscure, arbitrary system of situation ethics.

Every Christian franchise has a different set of taboos, yet when it comes to God's commandments they pick and choose or ignore however they see fit in the same arbitrary manner. The last place we need to go for judgment concerning homosexuality is the Christian Church even when it agrees with Torah. When the Church condemns homosexuality we must realize that this pronouncement comes from a religion based on idolatry and pagan religion in general—they will be as liable to God's judgment as the homosexuals they condemn.

Not only are extremist Christians not in a position to judge homosexuals, but the Christian Church has had a questionable position on homosexuality through the centuries. While it officially has condemned homosexuality, its clergy has had many problems with homosexuality. This is a symptom of the times, not directly Church doctrine or knowledge. Even some Jews have fallen to such societal winds through weak rabbis allowing themselves to be given to perversion or far too liberal attitudes. But at one point in Christianity's history readers should know that same sex unions occurred under religious auspices according to evidence provided by scholar John Boswell (*Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, 1995). But elsewhere Boswell's exegesis of scripture (in *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 1980) is quite defective concerning Torah.

How should we as followers of Torah and compassion look at homosexuals? First of all we should look at them as people who practice a certain type of sin, a grave sin, much in the way we look at Christians who are fully engaged in idolatry and who mock God's commandments. We can't pretend to approve of sins, but must teach repentance. When I deal with Christians each day I do not see them overtly sinning during the regular course of business. Likewise, if a male who is rumored to have had sex with other men comes in, I am not aware of that as *fact*. You must ask yourself, how do you treat the Christian who is in your presence who decides to openly admit his criminal practices—participating in a church that worships a man and condemns our God and His commandments or mocks them by misusing them? Treat the suspected homosexual the same way. The crime of one is as bad and liable to the death sentence under God's law as the other.

For example, you might explain to a Christian that what he describes is against God, and why he should leave such practices, regardless of his culture, family, and environment that justifies and even disguises such behavior as normal and good. Likewise, regardless of a man's propensities or even an alleged genetic preference for other males, or if his environment convinces him that homosexuality is acceptable, it is biblically criminal. Yet it cannot be dealt with more harshly or leniently than other capital sins like idolatry.

Anyone can have a destructive, perverse, or self serving behavior. Only the actual instance of male to male sex is the sin, and not feeling or acting homosexual. Let the person marry a female and have children and ease his homosexual desire with a woman in whatever manner satisfies his need even if the wife must play the part of a male. A male who desires another man should realize that in reality most males cannot be fully satisfied and must contend with insatiable fantasies. If every male cannot be "fulfilled" with each Playmate of the Month or movie vixen, then why should we be sympathetic to a male who dreams of sex with another male? Just as many of our fantasies could be sinful, how would the male to male homosexual fantasy be less so? We do not indulge someone's perverse "need" of pederasty, incest, bestiality, or abuse, but if these perversions are not acted out they cannot be charged against someone. It doesn't matter if a man wants a man. He cannot have one according to God.

Can we put such people engaged in a biblical crime to death? Presently, no, and here is why. The biblical Torah is a full social system and cannot be picked apart to find a way to destroy another in an arbitrary way, any more than in any system of legislation. Our society is not faithfully based on Torah and so any attempt short of complete adoption by a society is destined to become a tool of oppression in the hands of the ignorant unaware of the Torah's full benefits and motives. We cannot have Torah administered by heathens, or heathens successfully administered by Torah. Torah is a social contract acknowledged by the members of a voluntary society individually devoted to God in covenant who realize that there is no better way than our Yahwistic Torah to achieve justice and equity for all. It is the standard. This means that every imagination of which an individual can conceive or of which others can be convinced does not constitute true justice. Instead it means that every conception of *their* justice is equal even though they conflict, and so *their laws* must continually and arbitrarily grow and change and be superseded.

This is one reason Christianity is defective and constantly inventing laws, improperly understanding justice, and arbitrarily redefining righteousness. It condemned itself when it rejected God's Torah to endless wandering in ignorance of Torah justice, to haphazard experiments in standards with a pretense of righteousness that change from one day and one nation to the next. This attitude is the one that allowed the door to open to perversion and an acceptance of men having sex with men. They themselves opened the church doors to gay marriage. When a religion starts with idolatry and rejection of God's instructions what can we expect and who do they have to blame?

Before justice will return to the world and the perversion will end, there must be a real standard, and that standard is Torah. But before this there must be repentance by individuals to Torah. As followers of Yeshua, we do not want to kill anyone but want them to turn to God. Until you do, make no mistake, sin, including perversions like male to male sex and idolatry, has consequences that harms us all.

Learning Biblical Hebrew

לשון עברית through Names

For this lesson in Biblical Hebrew we build on the system of transliteration we provided in issue one, pages 22-23 (“Israel’s Bible: An Introduction to the Yahwistic Scriptures,” Tables 1.1 and 1.2). In that same article you were also introduced to the names of biblical books including those named after prophets. In this lesson we will present and discuss the names of biblical persons according to their actual names given in the scriptures. This will familiarize you more by working through unfamiliar letters and vowels with familiar names. But also you will be encouraged to use the actual Hebrew names. Isn’t it time we do?

Let’s start with אֲבִינִי, אֲבִיהוּ, אֲבִימֶלֶךְ.

These three names have a common element, the letters אבִי which can be translated as two words. אבִי (ʾab) means father either as a biological father or ancestor as literal or figuratively as the *originator*. In Biblical Hebrew (BH) words consist of a basic form with affixes added to create nouns with possessives or verbs and their state. An affix for English is a *prefix* or *suffix* added to the beginning or end of the base word to inflect meaning, however, in BH affixes can be added within the base word also. Examples in English of a prefix would be *dis-* added to belief, making *disbelief*; and *-ing* added to go to make *going*.

In the names above a first person singular possessive affix, ׀ (ʾ) has been added to אבִי (ʾab) to create אֲבִי (ʾabʾ) *my father*. So all of these names contain *my father* as part of their meaning. אֲבִינִי (ʾa-bī-ḡa-yil) has the elements of *my father* with a form of the word for *going round* in celebration, or *joy*. The relationship linking the two is supplied by the translator who might render the name as meaning, “Joy is my father.” אֲבִיהוּ (ʾa-bī-yah-wʿ) would mean “Yah(wʿ) is my father;” אֲבִימֶלֶךְ (ʾa-bī-me-lek) means

“my father *is* king.”

Look at this word אֵל (ʾēl, meaning *god* or *power*). Now using what we learned above, what does אֵלִי mean? What about אֵלֵיהוּ (or, אֵלֵיהָ)? They mean “my god/power” and “Yah(we) is my God/Power,” respectively. In many studies יְהוּ has been rendered –yāhū but it is not likely anyone pronounced this theophoric affix this way.

It looks as if other possessives (your, our, etc.) are not used in names, but the first person singular possessive ׀ (ʾ) is also found in names like אֲדֹנִיָּה (ʾā-dō-nî-rām) “my superior is high”; אֲוִרְיָה (ʾû-rî-yāh) probably “my light is Yah”; אֲחִיטֹב (ʾāhîṭûb) “my brother... good”.

We can find the divine name, Yahweh, as an assumed *hyporisticon* (a short form) on the front or end to make a *theophoric* name (a name bearing a god’s name). We have shown several that add it on the end. יְהוֹיָדָע (Masoretic pointing gives yʾhōyādāʿ; anglicized, “Jehoiada”) is an example of many names bearing Yahweh at the beginning, but also appears as יְיָדָע (yōyādāʿ). It is possible that these reflect

defective spelling, and eventual shortening, and that originally only the forms Yahweh and Yah existed. Fully spelled יהוה *Yahweh* could have been spelled defectively יהו (yāhwe), or יי (yāwe), giving the names yāh-we-yā-dā^c > yāh-w³-yā-dā^c > yāhw-yā-dā^c (yow-yā-dā^c); and yā-we-yā-dā^c > yāhw-yā-dā^c / yow-yā-dā^c.

In the discussion above, *Masoretic* (MT) refers to the work of the traditional scribes who fixed the vowel-pointing, and also cantillation marks (ṭ³āmîm) for chanting the Bible's Hebrew text. This was set by around the 10th century CE, a time when reading the sacred name had become taboo. Please, keep in mind that most religious rabbinic Jews do not read the Name aloud or use it in conversation, so do not offend them. Yet we know that this scruple caused scribes to add foreign vowel-points (*niqqudim*) to the sacred name so the reader would say ʔādōnay or ʔēlōhîm instead of it.

One of the most interesting things revealed by looking at (and using) Hebrew names found in scripture is how different many of them are from what we find in translations. Part of the reason is that some languages do not have the same sounds found in Hebrew, particularly for the letters ו, פ, צ, and כ. But be assured that the tendency to transform names doesn't stop there, and many Hebrew words and the concepts they represent are different than in the foreign languages of which Hebrew of the scriptures has been translated.

The foreign languages themselves change over time, and letters like the Latin or English I and V for examples have different values today than they once did. The consonantal *I* of English was given a tail and became our modern *J* with a harder “dʒ” sound rather than the *Y* sound it once had when the Christian “King James Version 1611” appeared and before. Such is the case for Latin as well, and words *juris* (as in jurisprudence) and *jus* (as in justice) were once pronounced with a *Y* sound and spelled *iuris* and *ius*. (Do you know who *Iulius Caesar* (“yoo-lee-oos kae-sahr”) is? These few examples should suffice to make the point.

We will supply some names but then give you some techniques for a beginner to explore others using your

transliteration skills.

Starting in Breishiyt (that is, *b'rē²-šît*), we have—in proper transliteration—the names:

Eve, *haw-wā* “living one”; Abel, *he-bel* “a wisp”; Cain, *qa-yin*; Enoch, *hā-nôk* “dedicated?”; Noah, *nō^ah* “comfort”; Shem, *šēm* “name”; Ham, *hām* “hot”; Japheth, *ye-pet* “open”; Canaan, *k²-nā^c-an* “trader”; Abram, *ʔab-rām* “exalted father”; Abraham, *ʔab-rā-hām*; Ishmael, *yīš-mā^c-ʔēl* “god hears”; Isaac, *yīš-hāq* “laughter”; Lot, *lôt*; Israel, *yīś-rā²-ʔēl* “struggles ... God”. *yīśrāʔēl* is often understood according to theology. Jews see the name referring to a relationship with God in which we overcome all obstacles through inner (and outer) struggles toward fulfilling our relationship with God in covenant.

Esau, *ʕē-sāw* “hairy”; Jacob, *ya-ʕā-qôb*. His sons: Joseph, *yô-sēp* “added”; Benjamin, *bin-yā-mîn* “son of the right”; Simon, *šim-ʕôn*; Reuben, *r²-ʕû-bēn*; Levi, *lē-wî*; Judah, *y²-hû-dāh* “he praises”; Isachar, *yīś-šā-kār*; Zebulon, *z²-bû-lun* “honor?”; Gad, *gād* “fortune?”; Asher, *ʔā-šēr* “fortunate”; Dan, *dān* “judge”; Naphtali, *naḫ-tā-lî*. Manasses, *m²-naš-šeh*, Ephraim, *ʔe-prā-yim*, the sons of Joseph. Their sister was Dinah (*dî-nāh*). We have Rachel (*rā-hēl* “ewe”) and Leah (*lē-ʔāh* “tired?”) two mothers of some of the twelve, daughters of Laban (*lā-bān*, “white”).

The meanings offered for the names listed are not necessarily accurate, and represent attempts, while some meanings are given by scripture itself.

Tips: You should have a Hebrew-English Bible that will help you compare the languages. Additionally there are free programs on the internet to show Hebrew text and also a “Strong's Concordance” number which can be used to see the Hebrew word behind the English. Do not become dependent on Strong's definitions or transliterations. Be sure to download any Hebrew texts the program uses from their site. Here are two good sources: <http://www.crosswire.org/sword> (The Sword Bible Project), and <http://www.onlinebible.net> in North America or <http://www.onlinebible.org> elsewhere. These are Christian sites.

Grow Your Beard!

You will not round off your hair at the edges or trim of the edges of your beard."

They will not make tonsures on their heads, shave the edges of their beards, or gash their bodies." (Wayyiqra 10:27; 21:5)

Many Jews shave and ignore the commandment, rationalize it away as no longer binding, or use scissors or electric razors which technically work through a scissors type action. Some who rationalize it away are similar to those who balk at the Torah's condemnation of male homosexual acts. They claim it has only to do with some type of ancient ritual practices, *priests*, and not intended for regular folk. I disagree on both counts. At any rate, all Jews are part of a holy nation, a nation of *priests* to the rest of the world (Shmot 19:5-6).

Why are we told by God to keep a razor from our heads and faces? He wants men to look like men, and with some notable exceptions, males are noticeable by facial hair. Women are typically not hairy faced.

There must not be male things on a woman; neither shall a man wear a woman's garments; indeed, all doing such are an abhorrent perversion of YHWH your God. (Devarim 22:5; Translation mine.)

Shaving the hair from the face is a type of sexual perversion—it makes a male look as if he lacks the hormones of maleness, similar to females who lack maleness. To have no beard puts us on par with female impersonators. It could mean that the male was a castrated eunuch who was no longer considered male and often held a female role. Eunuchs and those whose "stones" were crushed excluded them from Yahwistic worship because they were no longer viable as men. Something had perverted the natural state they were born with as males.

Beards were the norm among most Eastern peoples in most times. But Canaanites (Phoenicians) did practice shaving as can be seen by archaeological remains including razors found in ancient temple precincts. This could have been influenced by the Egyptians with whom the Phoenicians kept close ties. Body hair was seen as filthiness, barbarity, and ritual impurity among Egyptians. Priests removed all body hair when they served in the temples. Hittites are also usually portrayed as shaven. Many ancient peoples of the West typically wore the beard, including the Romans until later times. It is said that Scipio Africanus was the first Roman to practice shaving. A barber from Sicily, Ticinius Mena came to Rome in 296 BCE and shaving became popular until the emperor Hadrian made wearing beards popular again as citizens imitated him. The Greeks were employing barbers by the 5th century BCE but not to shave but rather trim and beautify their beards. Alexander felt that a beard could put a soldier at a disadvantage and ordered his men to shave before battle to deny an enemy a "handle" in close combat. Some Greeks would imitate this custom initiated by soldiers. But beardlessness was also associated with youth and the beauty of youth which was alluring to Greek men wanting homosexual relationships with young men and boys. Bisexuality was a common practice among the Greeks including Alexander. Christian priests wore beards also until the time of Photius of Constantinople (800s). Clergy of the Eastern Church still wear the beard. Roman Catholic priests in Eastern lands may still wear beards because of the effeminacy associated there with a smooth shaven face. Even afterwards there were bearded popes shown in 16th century portraits.

But in earlier times Christians were instructed to not pervert the male nature by shaving their beard. In fact, the Christian *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 390) say:

"Men may not destroy the hair of their beards and unnaturally change the form of a man. For the Law says, "You will not deface your beards." For God the Creator has made this decent for women, but has determined that it is unsuitable for men."

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 195 CE) says:

"How womanly it is for one who is a man to comb himself and shave himself for the sake of fine effect, and to arrange his hair at a mirror, shave his cheeks, pluck hairs out of them, and smooth them! For God wished women to be smooth and to rejoice in their locks alone, growing spontaneously, as a horse in his mane. But He has adorned man, like the lions, with a beard, a sign of strength and rule." -*Paedagogus*, Book III

So it was a general belief that among most peoples the beard was the sign of maleness, and to be without one was often a sign of effeminacy. Among most ancient peoples of Middle East shaving was an act of humiliation of an enemy (similar to homosexual

rape of an enemy). It signified that a man had been dominated and now was put in a position without masculinity and could be used as a woman. When the prophet Yesha'yah wants to warn the people of the consequences of transgression against God he tells them:

In that day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also sweep away the beard. 7:20

In other words, the men of the nation would be totally dominated and humiliated, and made (and used?) like captive women (See De 12:12).

Shaving had strong pagan associations as well other than the gentile tendency to allow gender confusion. Priesthoods in pagan lands could include ritual or symbolic haircuts, or shaving (as Yahwism does also in limited instances of hair removal ending a *nazir* vow, or treating a leper). We have already seen that Egyptian priests shaved all hair from their bodies. But in Yahwistic religion a man totally dedicated to God through the nazir vow let his hair grow (Bemidbar 6).

It is probable that the prohibitions against shaving are related to other pagan religious practices most immediately of the Phoenician-Canaanite culture. Archaeological evidence of shaving in a Canaanite religious context has already been mentioned, but the Canaanites and Phoenicians are known to use temple whores, both females and boys. It is known that infanticide was also practiced in a ritual way. And all of these practices are also condemned in scripture.

Shaving and other means of removing maleness, such as castration and sacred prostitution can be found as a ritual practice in worship of the *Magna Mater* (the universal "Great Mother" goddess). During ceremonies celebrating the ritual drama of *Kubile* (Cybele, etc.) and her lover Attis (Tammuz, Dumuzi, etc.), Attis castrated himself beneath a pine tree, bled to death, and violets sprang up from his blood, and the *archgallia* (the chief transgender priest) slashed his arms to initiate a frenzy among others who followed suit, splattering blood on an altar and sacred pine. This form of the religion took place more often in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The *galli* (or *gallae*) devotees of Cybele practiced ancient sex-change operations of a brutal nature, and then dressed and acted as women. This sounds strangely reminiscent to practices of ancient near eastern Mother cults including that of Asherah spoken of in the Bible.

Today shaving is associated with youth (androgyny, prepubescence, effeminacy), cleanliness, and subordination of males to authority whether the authority be derived from standards set by employers, fashion, peers, TV, or the rewards for submitting to these, whether it be acceptance, money, or sex. In any case, beards often carry a stigma today because they can indicate non-conformity and independent thought. Does the local minister look more like Moses, or more like a catalog model, salesman, banker, gigolo, or politician? Can a clean-shaven man be a godly man? The Bible would seem to indicate that he has some problems with obedience to God. Does a beard establish godliness? That's hardly the case. Currently the West is at war with fundamentalist Islam often associated with bearded men (although it is tradition, not the Qur'an that dictates Muslim beards). So now perhaps beards will be associated with Islamic terrorism. Such an assumption has already been used against me, and I am certainly not Islamic nor have I committed any terrorist acts. It is incidental that Muslim beard wearing A beard is simply one among many biblical precepts, all of which should be pursued.

We can expect a new wave of rigor to conformity which dictates submission not to God but the current ideal of Western "clean-cut" values which are derived from something other than scripture. We can also expect failure to submit to this pagan derived ideal to be enforced with the typical venom and ignorance found in most societies toward non-conformists.

There are perhaps "loopholes" in the Torah allowing the removal of our beards with scissors or depilatories. We could fit in better with our gentile neighbors. But why would we want to imitate them? We have long decided that their values and standards are far from godly or biblical or based even on common decency.

Something that clinched my decision to wear my beard years ago is very symbolic and powerful to me. I saw pictures of clean-cut Christian Nazis abusing Jews, humiliating them by cutting off their beards in a public display, as if spitting in God's face and laughing. To this day I see a man without a beard as a bad thing, as a shaved face recalls to me Nazis, pagans, eunuchs, and others throughout history who have had too little regard for God or His commandments, often choosing to mock rather than obey.



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